Phoenix

June 96

Rs 5-00

JOURNAL ON MUSIC & DANCE



LAKSHMI JEWELLERY COMPANY

Manufacturing Jewellers for over 55 years

Dealers in:

Precious and Semi Precious Stones

Manufacturers of:

Shields, Trophies, Lapel Badges and Medals

LAKSHMI JEWELLERY COMPANY

NAGARTHPET, BANGALORE 560002

✆ 2212635 Estd 1940



PHOENIX

Journal on Music and Dance

Vol 1 June 1996 No 8

S.N.Chandrasekhar
67 Basappa Layout
Bangalore 560019 ✆ 6675758
Editor

N.Sundarraj
138, 5th Cross, Gandhinagar
Bangalore 560009 ✆ 2263696
Managing Editor

B. Rajashekar
✆ 2216459
Advertising Manager

Representatives
Ganapathi Bhat
Hubli -Dharwar
K. Ramamurthy Rao
Mysore
Geeta Raja
9 Chhaya, Jam-e-Jamshed Road
Matunga, Bombay 400019
✆ 412 2074

Annual Subscription: Rs 50-00
Three Years: Rs 140-00

Please send all remittances to
PHOENIX
The Circulation Manager
138, 5th Cross, Gandhinagar
Bangalore 560009 ✆ 2263696
(Cheques to be drawn on 'PHOENIX')

RN 45468/87

Contents

4 Readers' Write

5 Self Audition

6 Tuneful Enounters

7 Calling AIR

10 Prathibha's Rise to Prasiddha

12 A Visit to Kumar Gandharva

14 At the Heart of All Arts

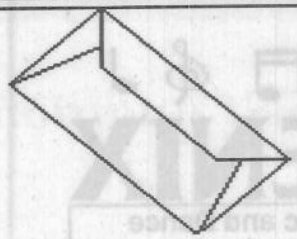
15 Kathak in North Karnataka

17 Cassettes Causerie

18 Know Your Artistes

Cover Photo by:
Dhiraj Chawda

Published by N.Janardhan and printed at Enjay Printers, 5th Cross, Gandhinagar, Bangalore 560009 Composed at IPC Grafics, Bangalore 560009 Phone 2263696



Readers Write

"Phoenix' is very informative, educative and thought provoking. All the articles are noteworthy. It is a well balanced magazine for lovers of classical music and dance.

The write up on 'MDR' was extremely good. You have rightly pointed out the 'quality' in his music and his nobility as an individual.

M.D.Rajamani
Calicut

THE MRIDANGAM SANG

APROPOS to the article "The Mridangam Sang" appearing in the HINDU of 15.3.1996.

Nobody who listened to Palghat Mani Iyer and Palani Subramania Pillai can deny the pride of place the duo uniformly enjoyed throughout their professional career. These two stalwarts were regular sidemen to the giants of the golden era" - to wit, Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer, Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar, Ariyakkudi, Alathoor Brothers, Semmangudi, GNB and Mudurai Mani Iyer etc. To use a cricketing parlance, if one was Don Bradman, the other was Garfield Sobers.

Both of them belonged to an enviable sishya papampara. The duo enjoyed the goodwill and blessings of Maha Vidwan, Pudukottai Dakshinamurthi Pillai, who was quick enough to spot the innate talent in them. Subramanya Pillai died in May 1962 and Mani Iyer in May 1981. With the passing away of GNB and Alathoor Sivasubramania Iyer in 1965 and Madurai Mani Iyer in 1968, the music scene took a sea-change. The Cutcheri format gradually took a turn after 1970 and Mani Iyer ran out of partners.

The proliferation of Sangeetha Sabhas and a steady increase of upcoming vocalists, violinists and mridangists witnessed a plethora of music concerts. While these may have attained proficiency enough to give concerts, it is doubtful if they have attained complete mastery in their chosen profession.

Both Mani Iyer and Subramanya Pillai had their own distinctive and individual style of handling the mridangam. (That they played even three Thani Avarthanams in a concert in those days is a different matter). There was both prose and poetry, besides "Sunaadham" in their Sollukkattus, which had a liberal admixture of grammatical Vallinam and Mellinam. Of course, one cannot expect to turn the clock back. But aspiring artistes who nourish ambitions to attain the level of excellence of these giants should find time to listen to present day senior vidwans like T.K. Murthi, Palghat Raghu, Sivaraman, V. Ramabhadran, Tiruchi Sankaran and Karaikkudi Mani, All of whom, remember Mani Iyer and Subramanya Pillai even to this day. Such was t he indelible impression the DUO had left. Nothing helps better than "KELVI GNANAM".

In his commentary on the BHAGAVAD D GITA, Adi Sankara has emphasised the need of learning Vidhyas as handed down by the successive gurus in their original and accepted standards. Likewise, Mani Iyer also stressed the importance of absorbing the original texts and not to make any in roads.

Both of them were conscious of the fact that they were only sidemen and in the exalted company of violinists of the stature of Chowdiah, Rajamanickam Pillai, Papa KS Venkataramaiah, Mayavaram Govindaraja Pillai and in later years, T.N.Krishnan and Lalgudi Jayaraman, they at once made the concerts both enjoyable and pleasing. Such was the team work that they maintained with all the vocalists, violinists and LAYA Vidwans.

Very few know that the eminent Scientist, SIR C.V. Raman did the signal honour of inviting Palghat Mani Iyer to his Laboratory in Bangalore to study the effects of Sound on Water.

S.Rajagopalan, Madras

India Foundation for the Arts

The India Foundation for the Arts (IFA), an independent, professionally managed grand making institution announces its second grant-making initiative in the area of arts collaboration and seeks assistance in the dissemination of this announcement to individuals and institutions who may wish to apply.

Applications can be had from The Foundation for the Arts, Tharangini, 12th Cross, Raj Mahal Vilas Extension, Bangalore 560080 ✆ 331 0584.

Next Issue

Cover Story, Veena Maestro V. Doreswamy Iyengar.

Report on 15th Taalavaadyothsava '96 and Ankura.

Calling AIR and Know Your Artistes.

Editorial

Self Audition

The AIR which incidentally is celebratidng its golden jubilee, in the recent past, has been broadcasting some music programmes, both vocal and instrumental. which could do credit neither to the national forum nor to the artistes themselves. Some of these were in prime slots, though the musical standard itself was so abysmally poor that the artistes concerned could hardly be categorised in the lowest rung. What is inexpiable is that these artistes should have managed to outwit the normally uncompromising standards of the audition board. The panels comprise members who are known to be exacting in their judgment, sticking to rigid norms. Often times they end up with nil results. Nor do the authorities object to such a dour prospect, keen as they are in maintaining a standard. Under the circumstances it is baffling how such casual if not amateurish stuff makes the grade.

If this is the case with some over-enthusiastic artistes of the present generation, there are a few in the tested older generation who are guilty of depleting standards. For most of them, their best is far behind them-slackened due to sheer ravages of old age or languishing due to setbacks in health. A few of them may have become complacent. In any case, when their music goes over the AIR, it is a pathetic presence, certainly not fair to an avid listener. People who are not aware of their achievements in the field may even form wrong or unfair opinion of their potential. Such conclusions about at least some of them may be unjustifiable, but irredeemable.

The authorities in the AIR are not totally unaware of such goings on.

But they are not empowered to discontinue the bookings for such artistes of proven discount. The procedure is not free from hassles. But they may suggest to the artiste that all is not well with her/his music. Or indirectly hint that their services would be more useful for features where it is their knowledge rather than the voice or the instrumental fidelity that counts. In fact, some senior artistes have thoughtfully resigned themselves to such a proposition with rewarding results.

But the best option is for the artistes is to impose a kind of self Audition on themselves. Such a step could indeed be a panacea!

S.N.Chandrasekhar



R.S.Ramakanth

Next night (April 20, 10 pm) brought on the air a worthy old recording of R.K. Srikantan's familiar music in full fettle. Its melodic grace was enhanced by the presence of M. Chandrasekharan's violin and Umayalapuram Sivaraman's mridangam support. The lovely alaps for Vachaspati and Kalyani augured nostalgic memories of the master's touch of class. Especially memorable was the rendition of Kalyani, embellished by the vocalised flashes of Chandrasekharan's violin. Nagavalli Nagaraj, next morning (8-30 am) was sensitive when she started with Gamganapate (Hamsadhvani). The resonance in her voice enlivened Shanmukhapriya (Marivere) revealing depth of technique and imagination.

Much has already been said of the Gottuvadyam recital of Usha Ramamurthy (April 27, 10-10 am). It beats one hollow how she made it to the prime slot on a Sunday. In comparison, even a not -too exciting violin solo of K.V. Raja Iyengar (April 22, 8-30 am) was a big relief. His alap for Shankarabharana did not offer much by way of aesthetic fervour, but the kriti Edutanilachite was not short of its lyrical endearments. Sakalagraha (Athana) was as pleasing for its melodic flourishes.

A.P. Sarvottam in his flute recital (April 24, 8-30 am) showed promise. His Charukeshi at once testified to his smooth blowing. His tone is soft, though the 'sangatis' were not honed to match the melodic content.

M.D. Ramanathan was verily a musicians' musician. His was an inimitable style. If the 'gharana' concept had any relevance to the Carnatic style, his name would have certainly adorned one such. A glimpse of that hallowed memory could be had in a recording from Madras (April 27, 8-30 am). The numbers like Kedara (Samayamide), Madhyamavati (Ramakatha) and Anandabhairavi (O Jagadamba) were among his favourites, each testifying to an individual style that blended raga-bhava and lyricism most appealingly. It was soulful music.

Sriranjani (Parvatharajakumari) gave R.S. Ramakant, one of the few of our young talents, a steady start. But neither Pantuvarali nor Charukeshi that followed was free from shortcomings. His 'sruti' couldn't be faulted. Yet it was by no means one of his best efforts. A honed, mellifluous voice was the mainstay in Sita Narayan's vocal recital for the National programmed later that night. The crisp Saranga varnam and



M.Nagaraj

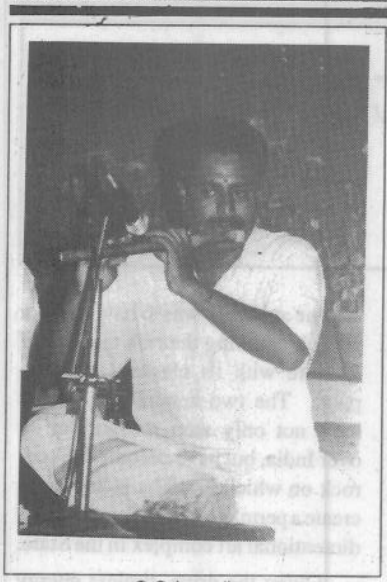


Seethalakshmi Venkateshan

Panchamatanga (Malahari) gave Sita a rollicking start. But once she drifted to her alap her failings became evident. Her delineation for Anandabhairavi (Marivere) and Kambodi (O Rangashayi) instantly betrayed her inadequacy in that major department. The standard was below par.

S. Srigandha's flute recital on the morrow (8-30 am) gave a good account of his steady progress. Whether it was the opening Goulipantu (Teratee) or detailed alap for Bhairavi (Koluvayya) his blowing was smooth and the euphony reassuring. Sitalakshmi Venkatesan, a senior vocalist (April 28, 10-10 am) was as consistent in the elucidation of her musical ideas as evidenced in her Bhajare (Malahari) and RamRaghu (Kapi). But the alap for Brindavana Saranga (Soundararajam) fell short in resonance, especially in the upper reaches, age having taken its toll on her vocal chords. Kharaharapriya, however, stood out for its modal fidelity, the Purandara Dasa pada going well for its lyrical appeal.

There was a breath of fresh air in the South Zone hook-up that same night (10 pm). The vocalist was V. Kalavathi, perhaps one of the youngest featured in that prestigious slot.



S.Srigandha

And she justified it with all her fervour. With a pliant voice that is honed to 'sruti', the senior student of the late Anoor Ramakrishna made an impressive beginning with Nee Chittamu (Veera-Vasantha). It was a confident start. The evocation in Madhyamavati (Nadupai) was more enduring, together with the detailed alap for Shankarabharana (Sri Dakshminamurthe) revealing a maturity much above her tender age. It was good music testifying to good grounding and sincere application. That should take her places.

The veena solo by Geeta Ramanand (April 29, 8-30 am) was as edifying for its spell of quietude that go well with a raga like Varali. Later at 9-30 am it was another artiste whose sights are aimed at profundity. Uma Gopalaswamy revels in coming out with some infrequent melodies. But this time it was the common place Saveri (Etunammi) and Shankarabharana. The latter showed her in her elements, the detailed alap revealing an equation of her own. The kriti (Bhakti Bhikshe) was not wanting in its lyrical appeal, but the 'swaraprasthara' proved inconsequential. R.A. Ramamani is not one to yield to flamboyance. She is almost severe with her alap as evidenced in Pantuvarali (May 1, 8-30 am). It was a wholesome treat, the kriti Raghuvara standing out for its range and skill in improvisation.

At 9-30 am same day, it was another staff artiste, Geetha Shamprakash on the veena. Her Poorvi Kalyani (Meenakshi Me) was replete with endearing 'sangatis', the structural development, the style of phrasing and the use of 'gamakas' in the kriti strictly adhering to a time-honoured tradition. But H.K. Narayana, a seasoned broadcaster, could not rise to expectation (May 1, 9-30 pm). No doubt, the familiar pieces in Abhogi and Khamas had their modal fidelity. But the rare piece Matangeem in Ramamanohari could hardly provide aesthetic excitement. It was far from satisfactory, to say the least. The violin solo of Mysore Nagaraj (May 3, 8-30 am) stood out for its flourish. Whether it is the opening familiar Goudmalhar piece Sarasamukhi or the robust Kalyani (Pankaja Lochane), it is there to see how his sensitivity of alap and tautness in the treatment of the kritis, have blossomed into an original force, as it were. Padma Gurudutt (9-15 am the same day) is also as consistent. Her Kedara piece testified to her sincere approach, though the 'swaraprasthara' dragged a little. But her essay in Shubhapantuvarali was in poor shape. She sounded awfully out of form.



Uma Gopalaswamy

As a contrast Jambu Kannan (May 4, 8-30 am) was in fine fettle. Her Poorvi-Kalyani was so neat that it almost appeared like listening to a replay of some forgotten musical moods. As elevating was T.S. Rama's Madhyamavati (Vinayukuni) next day at 8-30 am. Her voice has a nostalgic fervour with an enduring quality.. As professional was the approach of K.G. Kanakalakshmi (May 7, 8-30 am). Her music is consistently tuneful, her Dharmavati (Bhajare) not being different. There is indeed a measured feel in her rendition - be it the alap or the words.■

ESSENCE

Music Competition

The Bangalore Gayana Samaja invites application from young musicians for its 28th Annual Music Competitions to be held in August / September 1996. Application forms can be had from its office on K.R. Road, Bangalore 560004 before July 22, 96.

Agenda for July

Bangalore Gayana Samaja

July 14, 96(Sunday)
Sukanya Prabhakar (vocal) S. Jyotsana (violin) and T.S.Chandrasekhar (mridangam).
July 27, 96 (Saturday)
Trichy Rockfort Music Festival.

Attention Organisers

Music and dance institutions are requested to send their programmes to the Editor, PHOENIX, 138, 5th Cross, Gandhinagar, Bangalore 560009, before the first week of every month.

Pratibha's Rise to PRASIDDHA

S.N. Chandrasekhar

When one thinks of some of our performing artists themselves setting up organisations to sponsor programmes in their chosen field, he cannot help feeling a sense of indebtedness to them for their spirit of service. True, some sceptics see in such enterprise a motive that is purely personal.

But if one considers the larger interest of art that has gone into the festivals that are being organised by institutions like Nupura (it is an unmitigated pity that its pioneering Nitya Nritya was cut short due to sheer lack of patronage), Kinkini, Tarangini and the Pradhan Dance Centre, it will be easy to perceive that such comments are uncharitable. In fact, each one of the foregoing organisations has enlarged the scope of its festival to throw open opportunities not only to deserving local talent, but also to a wide spectrum of reputed artists from all over the country. If in the bargain, the sponsor also uses the forum to exhibit his or her talent one will have to be generous to concede that charity begins at home !



Avinash Pasricha

Pratibha Prahallad's Prasiddha Foundation, launched less than 10 years ago, has set before itself more ambitious objectives than many others in that type of set-up. Firstly, it went about involving in its ambit both music and dance, the founder's known prediliction for the Hindustani style of music manifest in the agenda of its festivals.

Secondly, the foundation didn't want to restrict its activities to the City alone. Even as Pratibha had finalised her plans for the first Sharad Vaibhava festival in Bangalore, she was getting ready with the format for a massive Vijayotsav in Hampi, the set of the never-to-be forgotten reign of the legendary Krishnadeva Raya. While the former catered to the urban elite, confining itself to the classical forms in their different perspectives, the one at Hampi was to have a wider appeal, clubbing the rich tapestry of folklore with its classical counterparts. The two annual gala events have not only won recognition all over India, but have become the bedrock on which Pratibha is hoping to create a permanent edifice for a multidimentional art complex in the State.

Given the drive, tireless energy and the plentitude of resources Pratibha has been able to garner, there is little doubt that her wondrous dream will become a reality in the not too distant a future.

The successful manner in which Pratibha negotiated with the Indian Railways to get a 25 percent concession (50 percent in I class travel) for artists itself is an eloquent testimony for her persuasive powers. That is an area where efforts had been made on several fronts, including some State academies in vain. Pratibha's efforts were an instant success, much to the delight of the artistic fraternity.

Pratibha's presence as a dancer compares admirably with her proven organisational abilities. She is undoubtedly one of our foremost

dancers, having made a mark both in Bharathanatyam and Kuchipudi. She has a distinguished academic background to boot, acquiring a master's degree in mass communications of the Bangalore University. Her topic for the dissertation (Treatment of Dance in Indian Cinema) itself shows her penchant for the art.

Pratibha's dance itself has an immediate appeal. Whether it is the simple structure of Kuchipudi or the high degree of sophistication in the complex Adavu patterns in Bharathanatyam, the personal presence she brings to bear on the import is delightful. Either way the movement flowers into a mature form. The dance overall appears unrestrained, often tending to make one feel that she is glossing over some of the little details in the style.

But the ebullient abandon, the panache as it were, is unmistakable, leading to an optimum aesthetic point. Likewise, her face all the time keeps a meaningful expression, consistent without being rigid.

Pratibha's gradual rise to fame has been entirely due to her own efforts and talent. Right from the early days when she was being trained in the art of dance, Under the Krishna Raos, Pratibha had acquired a poise and confidence which are the assets of a serious dancer. Her short stint with the renowned Muthuswamy Pillai chiselled her style further, veteran Chinna Satyam's tutelege in Kuchipudi finally helping her to emerge as a refined artiste. Today the regularity of her programmes, spread all over the country and abroad over the yeas is a fitting testimony that her dancing has been striking many a chord among her audience.

The demand on her professional standing has taken Pratibha far and wide. Besides regular expositions to fulfil local obligations. Pratibha has figured in prestigious festivals like the Khajuraho and Konarak festivals, Ustad Allauddin Khan (Maihar) and Durgalal Memorial festivals, Tansen Tyagaraja 'Samarohs' and the Osho International Commune. She has also

Dhiraj Chawda



danced for the Spirit of Freedom concerts. Her tours abroad have been as extensive, taking her to many important centres of culture in the USA, Canada, the UK, Thailand the Philippines, Japan and Dubai.

Pratibha's first US jaunt was at the invitation of the University of California at San Jose. Besides performing for select audiences there, Pratibha taught specific topics relating to the origin and growth of performing arts to students in the Masters class in the Department of Dance Anthropology and Indology of the university. As significant was her recitals at the Vishwa Kannada Sammelan at Manchester (UK) in the same year 1987.

The most coveted honour she has enjoyed is to be invited to dance at the Okayama International Dance Festival of Japan in 1993. Pratibha was the first classical dancer from India to be bestowed with that signal honour. As memorable is the Manila International Dance conference, Philippines in 1991. Pratibha was the only dancer from India to dance in that festival. She was also invited by a body of the United Nations Interim Committee for co-ordination of the Lower Mekong in Thailand (1990) to dance and to give lecture demonstrations.

On the academic side, Pratibha was an awardee of the Central Department of Culture to study the Devadasi system of dance in North Karnataka on a junior fellowship. She has many papers to her credit, written for seminars and for publications from time to time. They include articles written for newspapers and periodicals. Earlier, she was a TV critic for a newspaper and for a brief period worked as a Production Assistant for the Doordarshan, Bangalore. The TV serials like "Nupur", "Nectar in Stone" and "Sruti" have won popular acclaim.

Awards and titles have naturally come her way. Notable among them are the Singaramani of the Sur-Singar Parishad, Bombay, Orissa Cine Critics's Award, Natya Bharati of Virupaksha Vidyaranya Mahapeetha, Hampi, and the Mahila Shiromani award for excellence in classical dance by the Shiromani Foundation, New Delhi.

All these achievements and contributions have given Pratibha a pride of place as one of the premier dancers of our State. It is an achievement one could be proud of, bringing credit both to her gurus and the land of her birth.

A Visit to Kumar Gandharva

S.N.Krishnasw amy

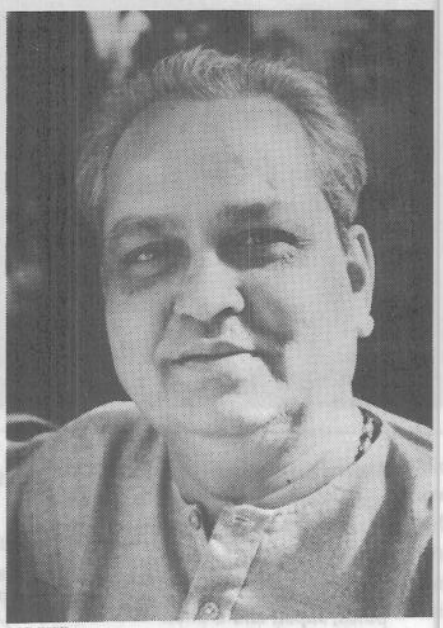
This visit to Indore was like a pilgrimage for me. It was a five-fold pilgrimage, a pancha yatra, as it were.

First on invitation I was in Kastur Ba Gram for a week. To me, it is a pilgrimage the National Institution set up to commemorate Kastur Ba, the great wife of Bapu.

The second reason was that I was to join my brother, Subba Rao, (Dr S.N. Subbarao, since the Kashi Vidya Pith conferred the honorary doctorate on him). While in Kasturba Gram, I would help Subba Rao make a cassette of National songs for use in his youth camp as well as in schools and colleges. This work was also like a pilgrimage for me.

The third pilgrimage was to the local Ramakrishna Ashram. T.N. Parthasarathi, an old friend who was the head of this Ashram had asked me to go there to conduct a couple of bhajan singing workshops. One for children and another for elders who already knew some singing. But I could visit the ashram and sing there, even if I may not conduct workshops. Parthasarathy gave me some bad news - he had just suffered a heart attack and since he could not spend much time with me, he would make all arrangements for my visit and for my bhajan session. So the third pilgrimage was also fulfilled. I did sing in the ashram, which made me happy and the group of devotees elevated by the bhajans.

The fourth pilgrimage was to Onkareshwar, a Jyothirlinga which is about 80 kms from Indore. I had visited Mahakaleshwar, another Jyothirlingam nearer to Indore earlier, on a visit to Bhopal with Subba Rao about 20 years ago. Parthasarathy made all arrangements for my travel, stay and visit to the temple. There it



was the river Narmada that captured me. The river splits into two branches and reunites in a Sangam after flowing as two streams for two or three kilometers. A rocky island is enclosed by the two streams. Onkareswhwar is located on a hill - top at the Eastern end of the island. It is just like Kaveri in Srirangapatnam or Srirangam. I felt most happy after a dip in the river.

My fifth and the most rewarding pilgrimage was avisit to Devas where the great Hindusthani vocalist, Kumar Gandharva spent last few years of his life. I had been wishing to go to his house for years. But now I had this opportunity, when he is no more with us except in spirit. He passed away last year.

I went to Devas with Eswar, my sister Uma's husband. That 30 km journey to Devas took only half an hour by bus. Devas is a quiet little town.

Kumar Gandharwa's house, 'Bhanukula' is near the bus stand. The autorikshaw walla knew the house. The fine bungalow is inside a large compound full of trees and a garden. The doors were open. The door bell brought out a fair young woman who said, "I am Kalapini, daughter of Kumar Gandharva". When we introduced ourselves, she said, "Subba Raoji has written to us about your visit, so we were expecting you."

I asked her, "How is your mother?"

"She is well, she will join us. Please be seated".

She went in and returned with glasses of water, for it was noon and quite hot. Then Vasundhara Komkali came out, greeting us with folded hands. She has retained Kumar Gandharva's name, Shiva Putra Komkalimath, even though he is known by the name he was given by a wondering, admiring Maharashtra, when he bewitched them with his music even as a boy.

Vasundharaji also said they had received Subba Rao's letter, but it arrived too late, They did not have time to reply to him. She asked about the recording he was planning. I was glad to tell her that we had a successful session in a studio in Indore, and Subba Rao had gone to Bombay with the spools to edit them for master cassettes.

Eswar told Kalapini, "We wanted some female voices to sing with us, we had some trouble getting a few young women to join us in the chorus."

Kalapini said "I would have been happy to join in the singing, if you had told me about it." We had never thought of it!

Vasundharaji took us inside to Kumarji's room. The room was large, but had little furniture. His bed was on side, along the wall. A life size bust of Kumarji smiled at us. Musical instruments were there, tabla and tanpura. The seats were in Indian fashion, on carpets with cushions to lean against.

I told her how I had been wanting to visit their home, for I considered myself a disciple of Kumar Gandharva, though he never taught me. For I learnt to sing many of his beautiful bhajans. I am like Ekalavya. I told Vasundharaji that I would like to have the two volumes of music that Kumarji wrote. She brought the copies. They were priced at Rs100-00 each. I paid her Rs 200-00. Eswar wanted a copy of Kumarji's photo. Kalapini brought two copies, one for me too, as her compliments.

Then I asked them if they could get the works of a song I heard on the AIR National Network during the bhajan sessions at 4-30 am one day.

"Which song?"

"Kashi sey aaya saari"

I asked her if she travelled a lot. She said, "By God's grace I do get programmes often. Recently I sang in Bangalore. I was the guest of Mrs Eknath Kamath."

I said "I had heard about her programme, but was away at that time. I knew Mrs Kamath. Kumarji stayed with them whenever he visited Bangalore. The last time I attended his performance, I have heard him many times in Delhi, when I was there. Then he used to stay in Gandhi Peace Foundation, where I stayed in Subbarao's room or he stayed in Gandharva Maha Vidyalaya opposite Gandhi Peace Foundation. I had heard him once in Pune also.

Vasundhara remembered, "Subbarao visited us often in the past. Kumarji and he found delight in talking in Kannada. Subba Rao has not visited us recently. Please tell him that Thayi is still there."

I told her that I will convey her message to him and he would find time to visit them and I would also like to come back to listen to the tapes of Kumarji.

Vasundharaji said, "I have a project to convert all the tapes to compact discs which last longer.

Will Karnataka come forward to finance these projects of Kumar Gandharva Academy of Music? For Kumar Gandharva is one of the greatest musicians born in Karnataka, though he migrated to Bombay and then settled down in Madhya Pradesh.

Should not the Government of India take the initiative in helping this Academy? Should not the Government and the people of Madhya Pradesh do something for this important work?

These were some of the thoughts that accured to me when I took leave of them. ■

Send your subscription to
The Circulation Manager
PHOENIX
138, 5th Cross, Gandhinagar, Bangalore 560009 by MO or Cheque (favouring PHOENIX).

Devagiri Festival

Sri Devagiri Sangeetha Sabha, Bangalore got up series of music concerts to commemorate its tenth anniversary in May.

It started with a lively concert by S. Shankar on May 11, 96, accompanied by Balu Raghuram (violin), N.Vasudev (mridangam) and B.S. Purushotham (kanjira).

Subhashri V Ramachandran of Madras gave a placid concert on May 16. Harini and Sharada presented a pleasant vocal concert on May 17 followed by a neat flute recital by V.K. Raman. He was accompanied by Balu Raghuram (violin), A.V. Anand (mridangam) and R.A. Rajagopalan (ghatam). Kiran gave a veena concert on on May 18 followed by a vocal concert by N.R. Prashant supported by M.S. Govindaswamy (violin), Ramesh (mridangam) and M.A. Krishna Murthy (ghatam).

On the concluding day, Rajkamal presented a flute recital followed by an impressive concert by T.V. Ramaprasad. M. Nagaraj (violin), Arjun Kumar (mridangam) and H.P. Ramachar (kanjira) supported him.

Rajaramanna, Chandrahasa Gupta, V.S. Krishna Iyer, Subhash Baharani, H. Kamalanath and G.N. Venkataraman were chief guests at the festival.

Dear Reader

Your comments and views are most valuable to us and the others too. We shall gladly publish the best. But, for maximum impact and better coverage, make them brief. Send your comments to: The Editor

IN LIGHTER VEIN

At the Heart of All Art

Manu Vijay

Rakesh Sharma said 'Sare Jahan se Achcha' when asked how India looked from outer space, and a whole nation took a deep breath and recorded the moment for posterity. India defeated Pakistan in the quarter finals of the World Cup, and Bangalore, and indeed the whole of a cricket crazy nation exploded in a frenzy of fireworks.

Sushmita Sen in a haze of tinsel and diamonds became India's first Miss Universe, and the country burst with pride. While it was neither you nor me who stood there, and experienced this moment of glory, we squared our shoulders, pulled up our collars and went to bed blissfully conscious of a feeling of achievement, pride and accomplishment.

The tide of sentiment and emotions that holds people in thrall, I believe, is what art is all about. Rakesh Sharma witnesses cosmic beauty, while Sen was grace personified. Cricket I think, has lyrical beauty all its own, and I have often held my breath at a Waqar Younis delivery or jumped off my seat at a flowing Sachin on-drive.

Societies and communities come together in the oneness of enjoyment to celebrate an aesthetic moment. Every face that witnesses, such an event is lit with a smile, and the peace and beauty of the moment warms the heart. This, I believe, is true Art and Aesthetics.

The late Pt. Durga Lal's scintillating performance at the Krishna Gana Sabha, Padma Subramanyam's first exposition of Krishnaya Tubhyam Namaha in Bangalore many years ago, or the thrill of watching the great gurus Venkatalakshamma, Kelucharan Mahopatra and Nataraj Ramakrishna on one stage, were such ecstatic moments of time that remain imprinted in one's memory. A meaningful verse sung mellifluously, an item rendered with great joy and verve and a beautiful moment in time, space and light on stage, seldom leave a dry eye in the auditorium.

It is this ability to move, to touch the heart, to communicate and reach out to one and all irrespective of the barriers of language, race and religion that provides art an exalted place in the life-stream of a culture, and leaves one proud of being an Indian. It brings to mind the pleasure Bangalore felt when newspapers flashed the news that Doreswamy Iyengar received a standing ovation in Kremlin at the opening of Festival of India in Russia.

From Here and There

Rajiv to Play in UK Fest



The celebrated Sarod Maestro, Rajiv Taranth has received yet another international honour. He has been invited by the well-known organization 'Sargam' of London to play at its National Music festival in June this year.

Rajiv left for the concert tour in England recently the tour includes a performance at the prestigious Philharmonic Hall in the festival "Milap '96" at Liverpool.

A series of interviews with Taranath, one of the foremost musicians of India, includes the one with the BBC on its popular show 'Kaleidoscope'. He is also scheduled to play for the Zee T.V. there.

Taranath will be back in the first week of July.

Bombay Beat

Shruti Sadolikar gave a Hindustani vocal recital at Dadar Matunga Cultural Centre accompanied by Vishwanath Shirodkar (tabla), Seema Shirodkar (harmonium) and Anant Kunte (sarangi).

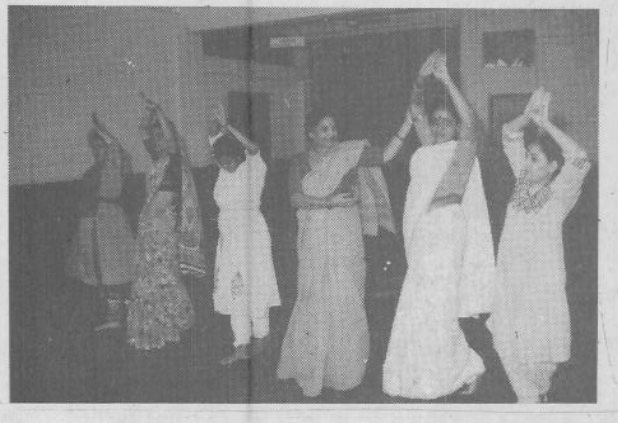
Ace Hindustani violinist N. Rajam gave a violin concert at the Indian Oil Sangeet Sabha, Bandra.

T.R. Padmini gave a vocal recital at Music Triangle, Santacruz accompanied by Kalpana Kishore (violin) and Nagai Narayan (mridangam).

A Three Day Summer Festival of Music was organised at Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha from April 27 to 29.

Geetha Raja

Towards a Solid Base for Kathak in North Karnataka



Maya Rao (third from right) arranging a pose in the Kathak workshop held at Dharwar

It is a well established fact that some of the exponents of Hindustani style of music hail from the Hubli Dharwar region, their disciples carrying the tradition forward with the same dedication to the Art. But, this cannot be said of Kathak, a sister-art of Hindustani music that has flourished in this region. At present the standard here is below par and in certain areas on the verge of deterioration.

This may be owing to the Gurus of Kathak migrating to bigger cities without leaving behind well-groomed disciples. Much concerned with this state of Kathak, the Natya Institute of Kathak and Choreography, Bangalore decided to hold Workshops for this dance style in different regions of North Karnataka.

The project proposed by B.V.K. Shastry was recommended to the Government for financial assistance and V.R.Kulkarni, former Director of the Directorate of Kannada and Culture accorded the grant. Maya Rao, the Director of Natya Institute, also a leading exponent of Kathak, conducted a three-week workshop at Hubli, the first in the series.

Its primary aim was to create awareness for good training in Kathak amongst the dancers and gurus in the region. The workshop was unique as it was conducted on a two-level basis. While it was a refresher course for teachers it was also a performance oriented course for young dancers. The project attracted as many as 60 candidates. But the selection committee chose only 16. They were drawn from Hubli, Dharwar, Belgaum, Raichur, Bijapur etc, undergoing intensive course. They were introduced to the salient features of Kathak along with the nuances as taught in the Lucknow and Jaipur Gharanas. May Rao was assisted by Chitra Venugopal, an exponent trained under Gurus Shambhu and Briju Maharaj.

The workshop was inaugurated by Padma Bhusan Gangubai Hangal, the celeb.ated vocalist. In her address, Maya Rao said that the need for good Kathak in North Karnataka was of vital concern to artistes there.

The valedictory function, presided over by B.V.K.Shastry, eminent art critic, was in the presence of the Commissioner of Police D.V. Guruprasad and Sharda M.Sirur, a Kathak enthusiast.

A colourful programme by the participants directed by Maya Rao was presented on the occasion to a packed audience, wherein the dancers from both the groups displayed clarity and good technique. An added attraction was a short recital of Kathak by Madhu Natraj with a fine portrayal for a Thumri and Tarana, testifying to the effective technique.

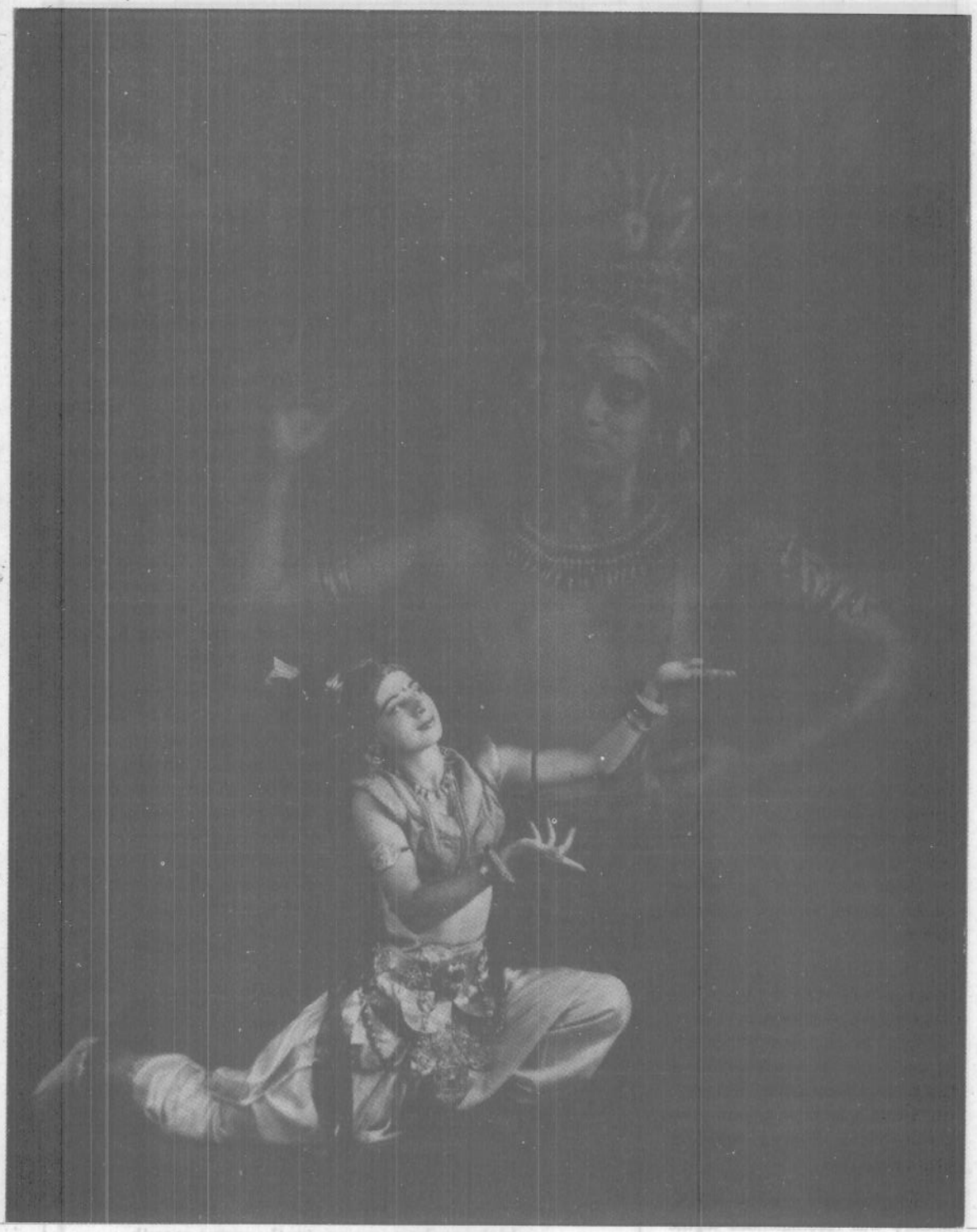
Correction

RMV Sangeetha Sabha, Bangalore will conduct music concerts on the Last Sundays of every month and not on the last Friday as mentioned in May 96 PHOENIX.

Editor

Subscribe to **PHOENIX**

The only monthly on Music and Dance from Karnataka which reaches you promptly every month
Annual Subscription: Rs 50-00. Three Years: 140-00
(to be sent by MO or Cheque favouring "PHOENIX")
to The Circulation Manager, PHOENIX, 138 5th Cross, Gandhinagar, Bangalore 560009



SHIVA AND PARVATI - J.N. UNWALLA, Hon. FRPS, FPSA

Cassette Causerie



PRATIBHA-II by V.Kalavathy (Hombale Live Cassettes, HIC-435, Stereo), 952, 21st Main, BSK II Stage, Bangalore 560070 Rs 30-00)

Hombale Live Cassettes have done well to encourage a young artiste for their latest release under the suggestive title Prathibha-II. The cassette presents a choice selection of Carnatic classical aria, rendered evocatively by V. Kalavathi, one of our bright prospects.

The opening Ekadantam (Bilahari) itself ensures that her soft, melodious voice is in good fettle. A judicious use of 'gamakas' and an array of cascading 'birgas' lend a sensitive touch to the major numbers in the selection- Saveri (Enta Nerchina) and Madhyamavati (Nadupai Palukeru). The rendition in each case is enriched by crisp 'niravals' and meaningful 'swaraprasthara.

Kalavathi is flanked by equally competent accompanists like Nalina Mohan on violin, Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma on mridangam, Vyasa Vittala on khanjira and B.R. Rav-ikumar on the ghatam.

Overall, it makes for good listening.

Swaramilana

Bhavayana by M.S. Ramprasad (SM i/1B, 2/96 Stereo, Vinayaka Enterprises, 33/1 IV Main, Nehru Nagar, Bangalore 560020 Rs 35-00)

Swaramilana has introduced an interesting selection of Kannada lyrics under the title "Bhavayana". In his ambit, the young composer Ramaprasad covers a wide variety of Kannada verses by well-known poets whose names read like a veritable "Who's Who" of the Kannada literary world. The tunes, with their nearness to the classical mode, go well with the spirit of the words.

And with singers like Narasimha Nayak, G.V. Atri, Ratnamala, B.R. Chaya, Archana Udupa, Anupama and the 'Arpana' group in charge of the vocal refrain, the impact is quite pleasing. The texture of the poetry finds its echo in the music, the two combining admirably as the song is vocalised.

An interesting fare.

SNC



Sree Guruvayurappan Bhajan Samaj Trust

Gokulashtami Celebrations

Venue: Odukkathur Mutt (near Ulsoor lake)

Aug 17 to Sep 8, 96

Programme (6-00 pm)

August 17
K.S.Gopalakrishnan (flute)
August 18
Kadri Gopalnath (saxaphone)
August 19
Karaikudi R Mani (Thani Avarthanam)
7-00 pm-Balaji Shankar (vocal)
August 20
V. Rajkumar Bharathi (vocal)
August 21
Sudha Raghunathan (vocal)
August 22
O.S. Thiagarajan (vocal).
August 23
Nedanuri Krishnamurthy (vocal)
August 24
U.Srinivas (mandolin)
August 25
D.Seshachari & D Raghavachari
August 26
C.Saroja & C.Lalitha (vocal)
August 27
T.V. Shankaranarayan (vocal)
August 28
Neyveli Santhanagopalan (vocal)
August 29
Trichur V. Ramachandran (vocal)

ALL ARE WELCOME

Subscribe to

PHOENIX

It reaches you by post every month

Know your Artistes

Balu Raghuram



Balu Raghuram

Balu Raghuram (22), violinist, learnt violin from S. Chandrashekar. Later he was guided by the leading vocalist, Neela Ramagopal and violinist A. Sundaresan. Now violin maestro T.N. Krishnan is teaching him.

Balu is the recipient of 'Talent Search Scholarship' of the Centre for Cultural Resource and Training, Government of India.

A student of Natinal College, Bangalore, Balu made his debut in1989 at Sri Krishna Gana Sabha and he has never looked back. He has built up his violin accompaniment career and is now a sought after artiste.

He has played to many leading vidwans of Bangalore, Madras and Bombay. and has participated in many music fastivals conducted by the Government of Karnataka, Department of Tourism, Zonal Cultural Centre, Tanjore and Nagpur. He was adjudged the best accompanist by the Bangalore Gayana Samaja in 1991 and 1992. He has won the best violinist award in the AIR Music Competition in 1992. Next year he won the Parur Sundaram Iyer endowmwnt award in Sri Krisna Gana Sabha, Madras and Tamil Isai Sangam awarded the Lalgudi Gopala Iyer memorial award. He also won the best accompanist award of the Karnataka Ganakala Parishat this year.

Balu is a "B High" grade artiste of the AIR. A sincere and dedicated artiste, Balu Raghuram is all set for a bright career.

Balu Raghuram
'Bilahari', 80/1 Old Post Office Road, II Block, Thyagarajanagar, Bangalore 560028 ✆ 619973

Ullur Giridhar Udupa

Young ghatam artistes, master Ullur Giridhar Udupa (16) is the son of mridangam vidwan Nagendra Udupa.

He learnt ghatam and playing from his father from his very early age and has bedome an accomplished ghatam and mridangam artistes.

A first year PUC student from the Vijaya junior C ollege, Giridhar has seccured III rank in junior percussive examination by the Government of Karnataka.



Giridhar who is performing on ghatam since his 12 years has accompanied many famour srtistes like Trichur Mohan, M.T. Rajakesari, V.S. Rajagopal , N.Vasudev, Vasudeva Rao Mohite.

Number of leading sabhas of South India hav e provided opportunity to exhibit his talent. He has featured in more than 500 concerts.

He has bagged first prize in percussion competition by The Bangalore Gayana Samaja in 1992. He has received the Yuva Prathistana Award and first prize in inter varsity cultural festivals. He has won appreciation from critics and music knowledgable audience when he performed at the National Children's Festival 1995 at Bangalore.

Young Giridhar Udupa is a promising artiste who will establish himself as a celebrated ghatam artiste of Carnatic music in the years to come.

Ullur Giridhar Udupa,
87, 5th Main Road, III Block, T Nagar, Bangalore 560028

Dear Reader

Your comments and views are most valuable to us and the others too. We shall gladly publish the best. But, for maximum impact and early coverage, make them brief. Send your comments to:

The Editor
PHOENIX
138, 5th Cross
Gandhinagar
Bangalore 560009

While setting your jewellery with
fine quality

American Diamonds

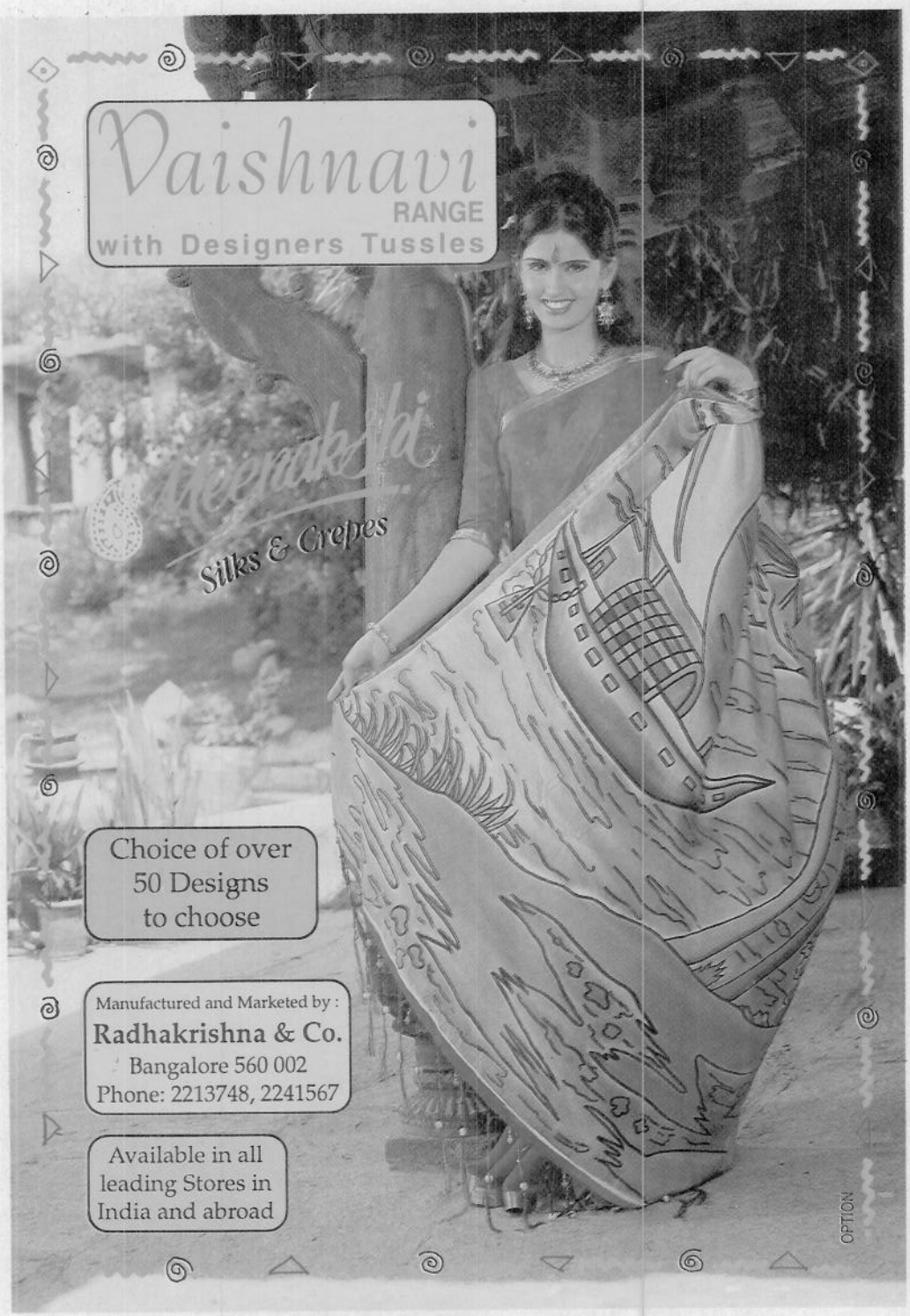
Ask only for

Kumar Gems

Pioneers in the field of synthetic diamonds for
over two decades

Kumar Gems

SriLakshmi Vittobha Complex, 160 Big Bazar,
Tiruchirapally 620008 ✆ 31359


Vaishnavi
RANGE
with Designers Tussles
Meenakshi
Silks & Crepes
Choice of over
50 Designs
to choose
Manufactured and Marketed by :
Radhakrishna & Co.
Bangalore 560 002
Phone: 2213748, 2241567
Available in all
leading Stores in
India and abroad
OPTION